

The State of Oregon's cell phone law requires the use of a hands-free accessory while using a mobile communication device and operating a vehicle (Oregon Revised Statute 811.507). A person under 18 years of age may not use a mobile communication device while operating a vehicle. Examples of hands-free accessories are: wireless or corded earpieces, headsets, or a car-kit that integrates one's phone to their car stereo via wireless connection. The hands-free accessory must permit the driver to maintain both hands on the steering wheel. The law allows drivers to perform functions of the phone; such as accepting or declining calls.

Officers of the Newberg-Dundee Police Department frequently observe violations of this new statute. Our goal is to reduce these violations, thereby increasing overall traffic safety in the community.

Often a police officer's focus is drawn to violators of the statute because they may be swerving in their lane, varying in speeds, and being generally inattentive, much like a driver that is impaired by drugs or alcohol. This lack of attention to critical driving skills contributes to traffic crashes resulting in personal injury and property damage.

Once close enough to a violator's vehicle, officers often observe the driver taking their eyes off of the road and looking down in their lap for extended periods of time as they text or dial. When it is dark outside, the glow from the phone's screen illuminates the interior of vehicles. This not only draws a police officer's attention, but it interferes with the driver's night vision.

A person's attention is divided when they use a mobile phone or text while driving. To quote the 2010-2011 Oregon Driver Manual: "The key to using mobile telephones is to remember that driving is your primary mission while behind the wheel. You must pay attention at all times."

There are several exceptions to the statute. The statute does not apply to a driver that is calling to summon medical or emergency help. Emergency service and public safety workers are also exempt while operating an ambulance or other emergency vehicle.

It is important for drivers to carefully examine the complete list of exemptions in the statute to ensure they are not in violation. Newberg-Dundee Police Officers are always available to clarify this statute if needed.

The fine for operating a motor vehicle while using a mobile communication device in the cities of Newberg and Dundee is \$154.